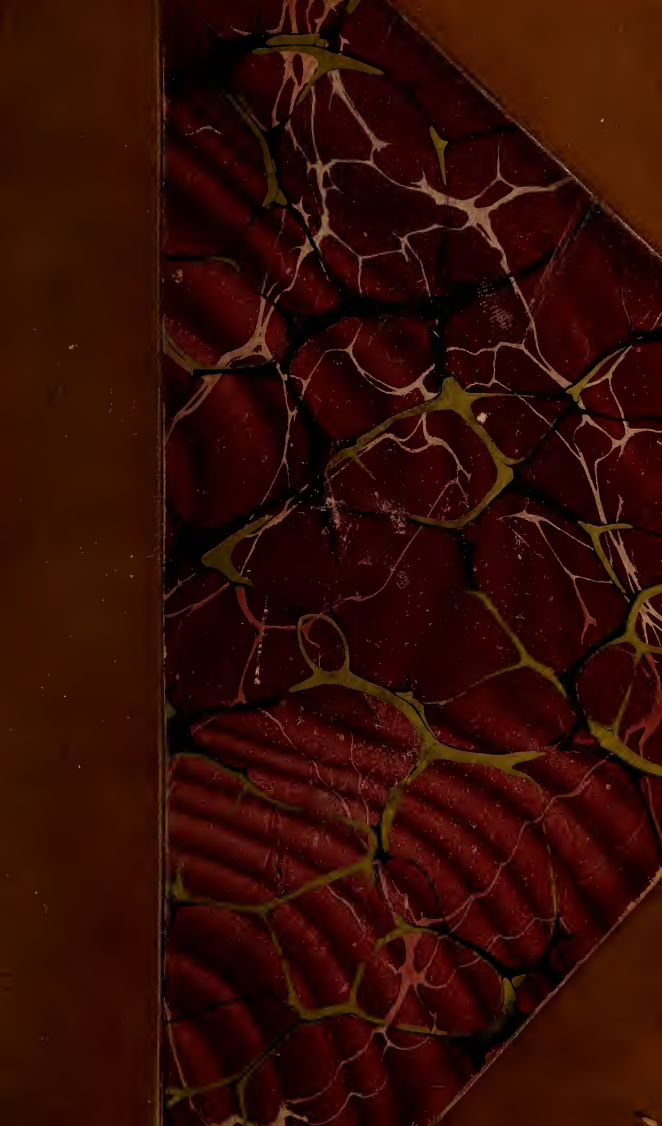




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FROM

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THE ROCK CHRIST;

OR,

A SHORT WORD OF ADVICE

TO

SAINTS AND SINNERS.

BY THOMAS WILCOCKS.



GLASGOW:
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1851

THE ROCK CHRIST;

BY

GEORGE WARD M. STANTON

AND

ELIZABETH AND SINGERS

AT THE NEW YORK



NEW YORK

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR

CHRISTIAN READER,

I FIND, in this latter day, the love of the Lord shining in some measure with its pleasant beams into my heart, warming my affections, inflaming my soul not only to give a spiritual echo in soul duty to so great a lover as my Saviour is, whose transcendent love passeth knowledge, Eph. iii. 19. but also the loving and wishing well to all Sion's heaven-born children; for I find, in this day, many poor souls tossed to and fro, ready to be carried away with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Eph. iv. 14: and that there are many foundations to build upon that are false, upon which much labour is spent in vain; that men are not speaking the truth in love; neither are they growing up unto him in all things, which is the head Christ, Eph. iv. 15. There cannot be a growing in Christ, without a union with him. Thou wilt find, therefore, gentle reader, this ensuing little treatise, if the Lord be pleased to bless the reading of it unto thee, as a still voice behind thee saying, "This is the way, walk in it, that thou turn not to the right hand or the left."—The way into that pleasant path of soul justification before God is in and through the righteousness of Jesus Christ, for **all** our self-righteousness is as filthy rags: surely shall one say, "In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory," **Isai. xlv. 25.** It is only the dying of that

Just One, for us unjust ones, that must bring us to God. He that knew no sin was made sin for us; that we who were nothing but sin, might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Christian Reader, let all that is of old Adam in thee fall down at the foot of Christ. He only must have the pre-eminence;—all the vessels of this new spiritual covenant temple, from the cups to the flagons, must be all hung upon Christ; he is to build the temple of the Lord, and is to bear the glory; he, by his Father's appointment, is the foundation-stone, the corner-stone, and the top-stone; he is the Father's fulness of grace and glory: whatever thy wants be, thou mayest come to him; there is balsam enough in him fit for a cure.

Reader, the good Lord help thee to experience the ensuing word of advice, that it may be made by God unto thee like honey, sweet to thy soul, and health to thy bones, and thy soul shall rejoice within thee. Thy brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel,

THOMAS WILCOCKS.

A CHOICE DROP OF HONEY

FROM THE

ROCK CHRIST.

A word of advice to my own heart and thine :—
Thou art a professor, and partakest of all ordinances: Thou dost well, they are glorious privileges. But if thou hast not the blood of Christ at the root of thy profession, it will wither, and prove but painted pageantry to go to hell in.

If thou retain guilt and self-righteousness under it, those vipers will eat out all the vitals of it at length.—Try and examine with the greatest strictness every day, what foundation thy profession and thy hope of glory is built upon, whether it was laid by the hand of Christ; if not, it will never be able to endure the storm that will come against it. Satan will throw it all down, and great will be the fall thereof, Matt. vii. 27.

Glorious professor! thou shalt be winnowed, every vein of thy profession shall be tried to purpose! It is terrible to have it all come tumbling down, and to find nothing but it to rest upon.

Soaring professor! see to thy waxen wings sometimes, which will melt with the heat of temptations. What a misery it is, to trade much, and break at length, and have no stock, no foundation laid for eternity in thy soul!

Gilded professor! look if there be not a worm at the root, that will spoil all thy fine gourd, and make it die about thee in a day of scorching. Look over thy soul daily, and ask, "Where is the blood

of Christ to be seen upon my soul? What righteousness is it that I stand upon to be saved? Have I got off my self-righteousness?—Many eminent professors have come at length to cry out in the sight of the ruin of all their duties, Undone, undone, to all eternity!

Consider, the greatest sins may be hid under the greatest duties, and the greatest terrors. See the wound that sin hath made in thy soul be perfectly cured by the blood of Christ; not skinned over with duties, humblings, enlargements, &c. Apply what thou wilt besides the blood of Christ, it will poison the sore. Thou wilt find that sin was never mortified truly; that thou hast not seen Christ bleeding for thee upon the cross; nothing can kill it, but the beholding of Christ's righteousness.

Nature can afford no balsam fit for soul cure. Healing from duty and not from Christ, is the most desperate disease. Poor ragged nature, with all its highest improvements, can never spin a garment fine enough, without spot, to cover the soul's nakedness. Nothing can fit the soul for that use, but Christ's perfect righteousness.

Whatsoever is of nature's spinning must be all unravelled, before the righteousness of Christ can be put on; whatsoever is nature's putting on, Satan will come and plunder it every rag away, and leave the soul naked and open to the wrath of God. All that nature can do will never make up the least drachm of grace, that can mortify sin, or look Christ in the face even for one day.

Thou art a professor, goest on hearing, praying, and receiving, yet miserable thou mayest be. Look about thee; did thou ever yet see Christ to this day in distinction from all other excellencies and righteousness in the world, and all of them falling before the majesty of his love and grace? Is. ii. 17.

If thou hast seen Christ truly, thou hast seen pure grace, pure righteousness in him, every way infinite, far exceeding all sin and misery. If thou hast seen Christ, thou canst trample upon all the righteousness of men and angels, so as to bring thee into acceptance with God. If thou hast seen Christ, thou wouldst not do a duty without him for ten thousand worlds, 1 Cor. ii. 2. If ever thou sawest Christ, thou sawest him a Rock, higher than self-righteousness, Satan, and sin, Ps. lxi. 2; and this Rock doth follow thee, 1 Cor. x. 4; and there will be continual dropping of honey and grace out of that Rock to satisfy thee, Ps. lxxxi. 16. Examine if ever thou hast beheld Christ as the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, John, i. 14, 16, 17. Be sure thou art come to Christ, that thou standest on the Rock of Ages, hast answered to his call to thy soul, hast closed with him for justification.

Men talk bravely of believing, but whilst whole and sound few know it. Christ is the mystery of the Scripture: Grace the mystery of Christ. Believing is the most wonderful thing in the world. Put any thing of thine own to it, and thou spoilest it; Christ will not so much as look at it for believing. When thou believest and comest to Christ, thou must leave behind thee thine own righteousness, and bring nothing but thy sin. (O that is hard!) Leave behind thy holiness, sanctification, duties, humblings, &c., and bring nothing but thy wants and miseries, else Christ is not fit for thee, nor thou for Christ. Christ will be a whole Redeemer and Mediator, and thou must be an undone sinner, or Christ and thou will never agree. It is the hardest thing to take Christ alone for righteousness: that is, to acknowledge him Christ. Join any thing to him of thine own, and thou dost on-Christ him.

Whatever comes in when thou goest to God for acceptance besides Christ, call it anti-Christ; bid it begone; make only Christ's righteousness triumphant; all besides that is Babylon, which must fall if Christ stand; and thou shalt rejoice in the day of the fall thereof, Is. xiv. 10, 11, 12.

—Christ alone did tread the wine-press, and there was none with him, Is. lxiii. 3. If thou join any thing to Christ, Christ will trample upon it in fury and anger, and stain his raiment with the blood thereof.—Thou thinkest it easy to believe; was ever thy faith tried with an hour of temptation, or with a thorough sight of sin? Was it ever put to wrestle with Satan, and the wrath of God lying upon the conscience? When thou wast in the mouth of hell and the grave, then God shewed thee Christ, a ransom, a righteousness, &c. Then if thou couldst say, Oh, I see grace enough in Christ, thou mayest say that which is the biggest word in the world, Thou believest. Untried faith is uncertain faith.

To believing, there must go a clear conviction of sin, and the merits of the blood of Christ, and of Christ's willingness to save upon this consideration merely, that thou art a sinner; things all harder than to make a world. All the powers in nature cannot get up so high in a storm of sin and guilt, as really to believe there is any grace, any willingness, in Christ to save. When Satan charged sin upon the conscience, then for the soul to bring it to Christ, that is gospel-like. That is to make him Christ, he serves for that use. To accept Christ's righteousness alone, his blood alone, for salvation, that is the sum of the gospel. When the soul, in all duties and distresses, can say, Nothing but Christ, Christ alone for righteousness, justification, sanctification, redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30; not humblings,

nor duties, nor graces, &c., that soul hath got above the reach of the billows.

All temptations, Satan's advantages, our complainings, are laid in self-righteousness, and self-excellency : God pursueth these, by setting Satan upon thee, as Laban did Jacob for his images ; these must be torn from thee, he is unwilling as thou wilt ; these hinder Christ from coming in ; and till Christ come in, guilt will not come out ; and where guilt is, there is hardness of heart ; and therefore much guilt argues little if any thing of Christ.

When guilt is raised up, take heed of getting it allayed any way but by Christ's blood, that will tend to hardening. Make Christ thy peace, Eph. i. 14, not thy duties, thy tears, &c. Thou mayest offend Christ by duties as well as sins. Look at Christ, and do as much as thou wilt. Rest with all thy weight upon Christ's righteousness ; take heed of having one foot on thine own righteousness and another on Christ's. Till he come and sit on high, upon a throne of grace in the conscience, there is nothing but guilt, terror, secret suspicions, the soul hanging betwixt hope and fear, which is an un-gospel-like state.

He that fears to see sin's utmost vileness, the utmost hell of his own heart, suspects the merits of Christ. Be thou never such a great sinner, 1 John, ii. 1 ; try Christ, to make him thy advocate, and thou shalt find him Jesus Christ the righteous. In all doubtings, fears, storms of conscience, look at Christ continually. Do not argue it with Satan, he desires no better. Bid him go to Christ, and he will answer him. It is his office to be our advocate, 1 John, ii. 1. His office is to answer the law as our surety, Heb. vii. 22 ; his office to answer justice, as our Mediator, Gal. iii. 20 ; 1 Tim. ii. 5. And he is

sworn to that office, Heb. vii. 20, 21. Put Christ upon it. If thou wilt do any thing thyself to satisfaction for sin, thou renouncest Christ the righteous, who was made sin for thee, 2 Cor. v. 21.

Satan may alledge, and corrupt scripture, but he cannot answer scripture. It is Christ's word of mighty authority. Christ foiled Satan with it, Matt. iv. 10. In all the scripture there is not an ill word against a poor sinner stripped of self-righteousness; nay, it plainly points out this man to be the subject of the grace of the gospel, and none else. Believe but in Christ's willingness, and that will make thee willing. If thou findest thou canst not believe, put him upon it; he works to will and to believe, put him upon it; he works to will and to do of his own pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. Mourn for thy unbelief, which is a setting up of guilt in the conscience above Christ, an undervaluing of the merits of Christ, accounting his blood an unholy, a common, and unsatisfying thing.

Thou complainest much of thyself.—Doth thy sin make thee look more at Christ, less at thyself? That is right, else complaining is but hypocrisy. To be looking at duties, graces, enlargements, when thou shouldst be looking at Christ, that is pitiful. Looking at them will make you humble. By grace ye are saved, Eph. ii. 5, 8. In all thy temptations be not discouraged, James, i. 2. Those surges may be not to drown thee, but to cast thee on the Rock Christ.

Thou mayest be brought low, even to the brink of hell, yet there thou mayest cry, there thou mayest look towards the holy temple, Jonah, ii. 14. Into that temple none might enter but purified ones, and with an offering too, Acts, xxi. 26. But now Christ is our temple, sacrifice, altar, and high-priest to whom none must come

but sinners, and that without any offering but his own blood once offered. Heb. vii. 27.

Remember all the patterns of grace that are in heaven. Thou thinkest, "Oh what a monument of grace shall I be!" There are many thousands as rich monuments as thou canst be. The greatest sinner did never surpass the grace of Christ. Do not despair: hope still. When the clouds are blackest, even then look towards Christ, the standing pillar of the Father's love and grace, set up in heaven, for all sinners to gaze upon continually. Whatsoever Satan or conscience say, do not conclude against thyself. Christ shall have the last word; he is judge of quick and dead, and must pronounce the fatal sentence. His blood speaks reconciliation, Col. i. 20; cleansing, 1 John, i. 7; purchase, Acts xx. 28; redemption, 1 Pet. i. 9; purging, Heb. v. 13, 14; remission, verse 22; liberty, Heb. x. 19; justification, Rom. v. 9; nearness to God, Eph. ii. 13. Not a drop of this blood shall be lost. Stand and hearken what God will say, for he will speak peace to his people, that they return no more to folly, Psal. lxxxv. 8. He speaks grace, mercy, and peace, 2 Tim. i. 2. That is the language of the Father and of Christ. Wait for Christ's appearing, as the morning star, Rev. xxii. 19. He shall come as certain as the morning, as refreshing as the rain, Hos. vi. 3.

The sun may as well be hindered from rising, as Christ the sun of righteousness, Mal. iv. 2. Look not a moment off Christ. Look not upon sin, but look upon Christ first: when thou mournest for sin, if thou dost not see Christ, then away with it, Zech. ii. 20. In every duty look at Christ; before duty, to pardon; in duty, to assist; after duty, to accept. Without this it is but carnal careless duty. Do not legalise the

gospel, as if part did remain to thee to do and suffer, and Christ were but an half mediator; and thou must bear part of thine own sin, and make part satisfaction. Let sin break thy heart, but not thy hope in the gospel.

Look more at justification than sanctification. In the highest commands consider Christ, not as an exactor, to inquire, but a debtor and undertaker, to work. If thou hast looked at workings, duties, qualifications, &c., more than at the merits of Christ, it will cost thee dear; no wonder thou goest complaining; graces may be evidences, the merits of Christ alone, without them, must be the foundation of thy hope to rest upon. Christ only can be the hope of glory, Col. i. 27.

When we come to God, we must bring nothing but Christ with us. Any ingredients, or any previous qualifications of our own, will poison and corrupt faith. He that builds upon duties, graces, &c., knows not the merits of Christ; this makes believing so hard, so far from nature. If thou believest, thou must every day renounce as dung and dross, (Phil. iii. 7, 9,) thy privileges, thy qualifications, thy baptism, thy sanctification, thy duties, thy graces, thy tears, thy meltings, thy humblings, and nothing but Christ must be held up. Every day thy workings, thy self-sufficiency must be destroyed. Thou must take all out of God's hand. Christ is the gift of God, John, iv. 10. Faith is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 1. Pardon a free gift, Rom. v. 16. Ah, how nature storms, frets, rages at this, that all is of gift, and it can purchase nothing with its actings, and tears, and duties; that all workings are excluded, and of no value in heaven!

If nature had been to contrive the way of salvation, it would rather have put it into the hands

of saints or angels to sell it, than the hands of Christ, who gives freely, whom therefore it suspects; nature would have set up a way to purchase by doing; therefore it abominates the merits of Christ, as the most destructive thing to it. Nature would do any thing to be saved, rather than go to Christ, or close with Christ, and owe all to him. Christ will have nothing; but the soul will force somewhat of his own upon Christ. Herein is that great controversy.—Consider—didst thou ever yet see the merits of Christ, and the infinite satisfaction made by his death? Didst thou see this when the burden of sin and the wrath of God lay heavy on thy conscience? That is grace. The greatness of Christ's merit is not known but to a poor soul in deep distress! Slight convictions will but have slight low prizings of Christ's blood and merits.

Despairing sinner! Thou lookest on thy right hand, and on thy left, saying, "Who will shew us any good?" Thou art looking over all thy duties and professions to patch a righteousness to save thee. Look at Christ now; look to him and be saved all the ends of the earth, Is. xlv. 22. There is none else. He is a Saviour, and there is none besides him, xliii. 11. Look any where else, and thou art undone. God will look at nothing but Christ, and thou must look at nothing else. Christ is lifted up on high, as the brazen serpent in the wilderness, that sinners at the end of the earth, at the greatest distance, may see him, and look towards him, John, iii. 14, 15. The least sight of him will be saving, the least touch healing to thee; and God intends thou shouldst look on him, for he hath set him upon a high throne of glory, in the open view of all poor sinners. Thou hast infinite reason to look on him: no reason at all to look off him; for he

is meek and lowly of heart, Matt. xi. 29. He will do that himself which he requires of his creatures ; viz. bear with infirmities, Rom. xv. 1. Not pleasing himself, nor standing upon points of law, ver. 2 ; he will restore with the spirit of meekness, Gal. vi. ; and bear thy burdens, ver. 2. He will forgive not only till seven times, but seventy times seven, Matt. xviii. 21, 22. I put the faith of the apostles to it to believe this, Luke, xvii. 4, 5. Because we are hard to forgive, we think Christ is hard.

We see sin great, we think Christ doth so, and measure infinite love with our line, infinite merits with our sins, which is the great pride and blasphemy, Ps. ciii. 11, 12 ; Is. x. 15. Hear what he saith : I have found a ransom, Job. xxxiii. 24 ; in him I am well pleased, Matt. iii. 18. God will have nothing else ; nothing else will do thee good, or satisfy conscience, but Christ who satisfied the Father. God doth all upon the account of Christ. Thy deserts are hell, wrath, rejection. Christ's deserts are life, pardon, and acceptance. He will not only shew thee one, but he will give thee the other. It is Christ's own glory and happiness to pardon. Consider, whilst Christ was upon the earth, he was more among publicans and sinners, than among scribes and pharisees, his professed adversaries, for they were righteous ones : it is not as thou imaginest, that his state in glory makes him neglected, scornful to poor sinners ; No. He hath the same heart now in heaven ; he is good, and changeth not ; he is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, John, i. 20. He went through all thy temptations, dejections, sorrows, desertions, rejections, Matt. iv. 3 to 12 and 26 ; Mark, xv. 24 ; Luke, xxii. 44 ; Matt. xxiv. 38. And he hath drawn the bitterness of the cup, and

left thee the sweet: the condemnation is out. Christ drank up all the Father's wrath at one draught, and nothing but salvation is left for thee. Thou sayest thou canst not believe, thou canst not repent. Fitter for Christ if thou hast nothing but sin and misery. Go to Christ with all thy impenitence and unbelief, to get faith and repentance from him—that is glorious. Say unto him, Lord, I have brought no righteousness or grace to be accepted in or justified by; I am come for thine. We would be bringing to Christ, which must not be; grace will not stand with works, Tit. iii. 5; Rom. xi. 6. Self-righteousness and self-sufficiency are the darlings of nature, which she preserves as her life; that makes Christ obnoxious to nature; nature cannot desire him; he is just directly opposite to all nature's glorious interests. Let nature make a gospel, and it would make it contrary to Christ. It would be to the just, the innocent, the holy, &c. Christ made the gospel for thee, that is, for needy sinners, the ungodly, the unrighteous, the accursed. Nature cannot endure to think the gospel is only for sinners; it will rather choose to despair than go to Christ upon such terrible terms. When nature is opposed to guilt or wrath, it will go to its own haunts of self-righteousness, self-goodness, &c. An infinite power must cast down those strong holds. None but the self-justiciary stands excluded out of the gospel. Christ will look at the most abominable sinner before him, because to such a one Christ cannot be made justification—he is no sinner. To say in compliment, I am a sinner, is easy; but to pray with the publican indeed, Lord be merciful to me a sinner, is the hardest prayer in the world. It is easy to profess Christ with the mouth, but to confess him with the heart, as

Peter, (to be the Christ, the Son of the living God, the alone Mediator,) that is above flesh and blood. Many call Christ Saviour ; few know him to be so. To see grace and salvation in Christ, is the greatest sight in the world ; none can do that, but at the same time they shall see that glory and salvation to be theirs. I may be ashamed to think, in the midst of so much profession, that I have little of the blood of Christ, which is the main thing of the gospel. A Christless formal profession will be the blackest sight next to hell. Thou mayest have many good things, and yet one thing may be wanting that may make thee go away sorrowful from Christ. Thou hast never sold all thou hast, never parted with all thine own righteousness, &c. Thou mayest be high in duty, and yet a perfect enemy and adversary to Christ, in every prayer, in every ordinance.

Labour after sanctification to thy utmost, but make not a Christ of it to save thee ; if so, it must come down one way or other.

Christ's infinite satisfaction, not thy sanctification, must be thy justification before God. When the Lord shall appear terrible out of his holy place, fire shall consume that as hay and stubble. This will be found true religion, to rest all upon the everlasting mountains of God's love and grace in Christ ; to live continually in the sight of Christ's infinite righteousness and merits, (they are sanctifying ; without them the heart is carnal,) and in those sights to see the full vileness of sin, and to see all pardoned ; in those sights to pray, hear, &c., seeing thy polluted self, and all thy weak performances accepted continually ; in those sights to trample upon all thy self-glories, righteousness, and privileges, as abominable, and be found continually in the righteousness of

Christ only ; rejoicing in the ruins of thy own righteousness, the spoiling of all thy own excellencies, that Christ's alone, as Mediator, may be exalted on his throne : mourning over all thy duties (how glorious soever) which thou hast not performed in the sight and sense of Christ's love. Without the blood of Christ on the conscience, all this is dead service, Heb. ix. 14.

That opinion of free will, so cried up, will be easily confuted, as it is by scripture, in the heart that hath had any spiritual dealings with Jesus Christ, as to the application to its merit, and subjection to his righteousness. Christ is every way too magnificent a person for a poor nature to close withal or to apprehend. Christ is so infinitely holy, nature durst never look at him ; so infinitely good, nature can never believe him to be such, when it lies under a full sight of sin. Christ is too high and glorious for nature so much as to touch. There must be a divine nature first put in the soul, to make it lie on him, he lies so infinitely beyond the sight or reach of nature.

That Christ, which natural free will can apprehend, is but a natural Christ of a man's own making, not the Father's Christ, nor Jesus the Son of the living God, to whom none can come without the father's drawing, John vi. 44. 46. Finally, search the scriptures daily, as mines of gold, wherein the heart of Christ is laid. Watch against constitutional sins, see them in their vileness, and they shall never break out into act. Keep always an humble, empty, broken frame of heart, sensible of any spiritual miscarriage, observant of all inward workings, fit for the highest communications. Keep not guilt in the conscience, but apply the blood of Christ immediately. God chargeth sin and guilt upon thee, to make thee look to Christ.

Judge not Christ's love by providences, but by promises. Bless God for shaking off false foundations, and for any way whereby he keeps the soul awakened and looking after Christ. Better sicknesses and temptations than security and slighthness.

A slighting spirit will turn a profane spirit, and will sin and pray too. Slighting is the bane of profession ; if it be not rooted out of the heart, by constant and serious dealings with, and beholdings of Christ in duties, it will grow more strong and more deadly by being under church ordinances. Measure not thy graces by other attainments, but by Scripture trials. Be serious and exact in duty, having the weight of it upon the heart ; be as much afraid of taking comfort from duties as from sins. Comfort from any hand but Christ's is deadly. Be much in prayer, or you will never keep up much communion with God. As you are in closet prayer, so you will be in all other ordinances.

Reckon not duties by high expression, but by low frames, and the beholdings of Christ. Tremble at duties and gifts. It was a saying of a great saint, he was more afraid of his duties than his sins ; the one often made him proud, the other always made him humble. Treasure up manifestations of Christ's love, they make the heart low for Christ, too high for sin. Slight not the lowest, meanest evidences of grace ; God may put thee to make use of the lowest as thou thinkest, even that, 1 John, iii. 14, may be worth a thousand worlds to thee.

Be true to truth, but not turbulent and scornful. Restore such as are fallen ; help them up again with all the bowels of Christ. Set the broken disjointed bones with the grace of the gospel. High professor, despise not weak saints. Thou

mayest come to wish to be in the condition of the meanest of them. Be faithful to others' infirmities, but sensible of thy own. Visit sick beds and deserted souls much, they are excellent schools in experience, Abide in your calling. Be dutiful to all relations as to the Lord. Be content with little of the world; little will serve. Think every little of the earth much, because unworthy of the least. Think much of heaven, not little, because Christ is so rich and free. Think every one better than thyself, and ever carry self-loathing about thee, as one fit to be trampled upon by all saints. See the vanity of the world, and the consumption there is upon all things, and love nothing but Christ. Mourn to see so little of Christ in the world, so few needing him: trifles please them better. To a secure soul Christ is but a tale, the scripture but a story. Mourn to think how many there are under baptism and church order, that are not under grace, looking much after outward duties, little after Christ, little versed in grace. Prepare for the cross; welcome it, bear it triumphantly like Christ's cross; whether scoffs, mockings, jeers, contempt, imprisonment, &c. But see it be Christ's cross, not thine own.

Sin will hinder from glorying in the cross of Christ, Omitting little truths against light may breed guilt in the conscience, as well as committing the greatest sins against light. If thou hast been taken out of the belly of hell into Christ's bosom, and made to sit among princes in the household of God, oh how shouldst thou live as a pattern of mercy? Redeemed, restored soul, what infinite sums dost thou not owe to Christ! With what singular frames must thou walk, and do every duty! On sabbaths, what praising days, singing hallelujahs, should they be to thee!

Church fellowship: what a heaven, a being with Christ, and angels, and saints in communion; what a bathing of the soul in eternal love; what a burial with Christ, and dying to all things beside him! Every time thou thinkest of Christ, be astonished, and wonder; and when thou seest sin, look at Christ's grace which did pardon it; and when thou art proud, look at Christ's grace, that shall humble and strike thee down in the dust.

Remember Christ's time of love, when thou wast naked, Ezekiel, xvi. 8, 9, and then he chose thee. Canst thou ever have a proud thought?—Remember whose arms supported thee from sinking, and delivered thee from the lowest hell, Ps. lxxxvi. 13: and shout in the ears of angels and men, Ps. cxlviii. and for ever sing, "Praise, praise, grace, grace." Daily repent and pray; and walk in the spirit of grace as one that hath the anointing of grace upon thee. Remember thy sins, Christ's pardoning; thy deserts, Christ's merits; thy weakness, Christ's strength; thy pride, Christ's humility; thy many infirmities, Christ's restorings; thy guilt, Christ's new applications of his blood; thy failings, Christ's raisings up; thy wants, Christ's fulness; thy temptations, Christ's tenderness; thy vileness, Christ's righteousness.

Blessed soul! whom Christ shall find not trusting in his own righteousness, Phil. iii. 9, but having his robes washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb, Rev. vii. 14. Woeful, miserable professor, that hath not the gospel within! Rest not in church trials; thou mayest pass them, and be cast away in Christ's day of trial. Thou mayest come to baptism, and never come to Jesus and the blood of sprinkling, Heb. xii. 24. Whatever working or attainments, short

of Christ's blood, merits, righteousness, (the main object of the gospel) fall short of the truth, and leave the soul in a condition of doubtings and questionings; and doubtings, if not looked into betimes, will turn to a lightness of spirit, one of the most dangerous of frames.

Trifle not with ordinances. Be much in meditation and prayer. Wait diligently upon all hearing opportunities. We have need of doctrine, reproof, exhortations, consolation, as tender herbs and the grass hath of the rain, the dew, the small rain, and the showers, Deut. xxxii. 2. Do all thou doest as soul-work unto Christ, Zech. vi. 5, 6; as immediately dealing with Christ Jesus; as if he were looking on thee, and thou on him, and get all thy strength from him.

Observe what holy motions you find in your soul to duties; prize the least good thought thou hast of Christ, the least good word thou speakest of him sincerely from thy heart. Rich mercy! Oh! bless God for it! Observe if every day you have the Day-spring from on high, with his morning dews of mourning for sin, constantly visiting thee, Luke, i. 78. Have you the bright Morning-star, with fresh influences of grace and peace, constantly arising, Rev. xxii. 16, and Christ sweetly greeting the soul in all duties? What duty makes not more spiritual, will make more carnal; what doth not quicken and humble, will deaden and harden.

Judas may have the outward privilege of baptism, the supper, church-fellowship, &c., but John leaned on Christ's bosom, John, iii. 23; that is the gospel-ordinance posture, in which we should pray and hear, and perform all duties. Nothing but lying in that bosom will dissolve hardness of heart, and make thee to mourn heartily for sin and cure lightness and indifference

of spirit, that gangrene to profession ; that will humble indeed, and make the soul cordial to Christ, and sin vile to the soul ; yea, transform the ugliest place of hell into the glory of Christ. Never think thou art right as thou shouldst be, a Christian of any attainment, until thou come to this, always to see and feel thyself lying in the bosom of Christ, who is in the bosom of his Father, John, i. 18. Come and pray the Father for views of Christ, and you will be sure to speed. You can come with no request that pleaseth him better. He gave him out of his own bosom for that very end, to be held up before the eyes of sinners, as the everlasting monument of his unspeakable love.

Looking at the natural sun weakens the eye. The more you look at Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the stronger and clearer will the eye of faith be. Look but at Christ, you will love him, and live upon him. Think on him continually,—keep the eye constantly upon Christ's blood, or every blast of temptation will shake you. If you see sin's sinfulness, to loath it and mourn, do not stand looking upon sin, but look upon Christ first, as suffering and satisfying for it. If you would see your graces, your sanctification, do not stand gazing upon them, but look at Christ's righteousness in the first place,—see the Son, and you see all,—look at your graces in the last place.

Go to Christ in sight of your sin and misery, not of your grace and holiness. Have nothing to do with thy graces and sanctification, they will but veil Christ, till thou hast seen Christ first. He that looks upon Christ through his graces, is like one that sees the sun in water, which wavereth, and moves as the water doth. Look upon Christ only as shining in the firmament of

the Father's love and grace, you will not see him but in his own glory, which is unspeakable. Pride and unbelief will put you upon seeing somewhat in yourself first, but faith will have to do with none but Christ, who is unexpressibly glorious, and must swallow up thy sanctification as well as thy sin: for God made him both for us, and we must take him for both, 1 Cor. i. 30. 2 Cor. v. 21. He that sets up his sanctification to look at, to comfort him, he sets up the greatest idol, which will strengthen his doubts and fears. Do but look off Christ, and presently, like Peter, you sink in doubt.

A Christian never wants comfort but by breaking the order and method of the gospel, looking on his own, and looking off Christ's perfect righteousness, which is, to choose rather to live by candlelight than by the light of the sun. The honey that you suck from your own righteousness will turn into perfect gall; and the light that you take from that to walk in will turn into black night upon the soul. Satan is tempting thee, by putting thee to plod about thine own grace, to get comfort from that; then the Father comes and points thee to Christ's grace, as rich and glorious, infinitely pleasing to him; and biddest thee study Christ's righteousness; and his biddings are enablings; that is, a blessed motion, a sweet whispering, checking thy belief—follow the least hint, close with much prayer, prize it as an invaluable jewel; it is an earnest of more to come. Again,

If you will pray, and cannot, and are so discouraged, see Christ praying for you, using his interest with the Father for you. What can you want? John, xiv. 7, and chap. xvii. If you be troubled, see Christ your peace, Eph. ii. 14. Leaving you peace when he went up to heaven,

again and again charging you not to be troubled; no not in the least sinfully troubled; so as to obstruct the comfort of thy believing, John, xiv. 1, 27. He is now upon the throne, having spoiled upon his cross, in the lowest state of his humiliation, all whatsoever can hurt or annoy thee; he hath borne all thy sins, sorrows, troubles, and temptations, and is gone to prepare mansions for thee.

Thou who hast seen Christ all, and thyself absolutely nothing who makest Christ all thy life, and art dead to all righteousness besides, thou art a Christian, one highly beloved, and who hath found favour with God, a favourite of heaven. Do Christ this one favour for all his love to thee; love all his poor saints and churches, the meanest, the weakest, notwithstanding any difference in judgment, they are engraven on his heart, as the names of the children of Israel on Aaron's breast-plate; Ex. xxviii. 21. Let them be so on thine. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee, Ps. cxxii. 6.

THE END

